

APPENDIX J
Presbytery of Eastern Virginia, Inc.
Paid Family and Medical Leave Policy (adopted 10/6/2026)

I. Purpose

The Presbytery of Eastern Virginia (PEVA) recognizes that faithful ministry includes seasons when individuals need time away from vocational responsibilities to care for themselves and those they love.

This Paid Family and Medical Leave Policy, together with other available leave benefits such as sick leave, vacation, bereavement leave, emergency leave, sabbatical leave, and applicable benefits provided through the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), is intended to provide a comprehensive and compassionate framework for significant life circumstances.

Paid Family and Medical Leave may include circumstances such as birth, foster placement, or adoption of a child; care for a family member with a serious health condition; an employee's own serious health condition; or healing following a loss or tragic event.

II. Constitutional and Denominational Context

The 225th General Assembly (2022) approved an amendment to G-2.0804, Terms of Call, requiring that the call of a called and installed ministers of the Word and Sacrament include a minimum of twelve weeks of paid family medical leave. The amendment was subsequently ratified by the required number of presbyteries and became part of the Book of Order, effective July 9, 2023.

G-2.0804 provides that terms of call must meet or exceed the minimum requirements established by the presbytery, that Session reviews the minister's terms of call annually, and that: "The call shall include provision for a minimum of twelve weeks paid family medical leave..."

The adoption of this provision was the culmination of several years of General Assembly consideration and advocacy throughout the church. Similar proposals had been considered as early as the 223rd General Assembly (2018), which referred the matter to the Family Leave Policy Task Force.

The General Assembly's work identified family leave as including leave related to the birth, foster placement, or adoption of a child; care for an ill or disabled family member; and healing following a loss or tragic event.

PEVA therefore adopts this policy to provide clarity and consistency in implementing the constitutional requirement and to support the health and well-being of those who serve the church.

III. Eligibility and Amount of Leave

A called and installed minister of the Word and Sacrament is eligible for a minimum of twelve (12) weeks of paid Family and Medical Leave during a twelve-month period.

More than one qualifying leave may occur during the same twelve-month period, provided the combined amount of Paid Family and Medical Leave does not exceed twelve weeks.

The twelve weeks established by this policy constitute a minimum benefit and not a maximum amount of leave that may be granted. Nothing in this policy prevents a congregation or employing body from providing additional paid or unpaid leave, sick leave, vacation, disability benefits, or other reasonable accommodations.

The constitutional requirement of G-2.0804 applies specifically to called and installed ministers of the Word and Sacrament. PEVA encourages congregations to provide comparable family and medical leave protections for other employees whenever possible.

IV. Qualifying Reasons for Leave

Paid Family and Medical Leave may be used for:

A. Birth of a Child

The birth of a child, including recovery from pregnancy and childbirth, bonding with the child, and providing care for the child.

B. Adoption or Foster Placement

The adoption or placement of a child for foster care and time necessary to care for and bond with the child. Leave related to birth, adoption, or foster placement shall ordinarily be taken within one year of the child's birth or placement.

C. Care of a Family Member

Providing care for an immediate family member or an individual with an equivalent family relationship who has a serious health condition.

D. An Individual's Own Serious Health Condition

A serious physical or mental health condition that makes the individual unable to perform the essential functions of their position.

E. Loss or Tragic Event

Time necessary for healing following a significant loss or tragic event when the individual is receiving appropriate medical or mental-health care. These categories follow the qualifying circumstances included in the PC(USA)'s current sample policy.

V. Definition of Serious Health Condition

For purposes of this policy, a serious health condition may include:

- a condition requiring inpatient care in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical-care facility;
- a condition requiring continuing care by a licensed healthcare provider, including surgery and subsequent treatment or rehabilitation;
- an illness of a serious or long-term nature resulting in recurring or lengthy periods of absence; or
- a chronic or long-term health condition that substantially limits the individual's ability to perform their vocational responsibilities or requires significant care of an eligible family member.

PEVA or the employing congregation may request reasonable documentation from an appropriate healthcare provider confirming the need for leave and its anticipated duration.

Medical information shall be treated confidentially, and only information reasonably necessary to administer the leave should be requested. The PC(USA) sample policy similarly provides for medical-provider documentation.

VI. Definition of Family

For purposes of this policy, immediate family includes a:

- spouse or partner;
- child, stepchild, adopted child, foster child, or legal ward;
- parent or stepparent;
- parent-in-law;
- sibling, including step- and half-siblings;
- grandparent;
- grandchild; and
- other comparable family relationships.

Recognizing that families take many forms, this definition may also include an individual related by blood or affinity whose close association with the individual taking leave is substantially equivalent to a family relationship.

VII. Compensation During Leave

An individual receiving Paid Family and Medical Leave shall continue to receive regular compensation for up to twelve weeks. For Ministers of Word and Sacrament, compensation and benefits shall continue in accordance with the individual's approved Terms of Call and applicable Board of Pensions requirements. Taking Family and Medical Leave shall not, by itself, result in a reduction in salary, housing allowance, or other regular compensation provided by the Terms of Call.

VIII. Benefits During Leave

During approved Paid Family and Medical Leave, applicable health, pension, and other employer-sponsored benefits shall continue at the same level and under the same conditions that would have applied had the individual remained actively at work, subject to the requirements of the applicable benefit plans. Benefits available through the Board of Pensions, disability programs, state programs, or other sources may be coordinated with this policy when appropriate.

IX. Relationship to Sick Leave, Vacation, and Other Leave

Paid Family and Medical Leave is intended to provide meaningful protection during significant life circumstances. An individual shall not be required to exhaust vacation or continuing education leave before receiving Paid Family and Medical Leave.

Available sick leave may be coordinated with Family and Medical Leave when appropriate; however, such coordination shall not reduce the minimum twelve weeks of paid family medical leave required for a called and installed minister under G-2.0804.

Vacation may be requested immediately before or following Family and Medical Leave in accordance with the congregation's or employing body's regular procedures.

X. Consecutive and Intermittent Leave

Paid Family and Medical Leave may be taken consecutively or, when medically appropriate or reasonably necessary, intermittently. When intermittent leave is requested, the individual and appropriate supervising or personnel body should work collaboratively to establish an arrangement that responds to the individual's needs while providing reasonable continuity of ministry.

XI. Requesting Leave

When the need for leave is foreseeable, the individual should provide as much advance notice as reasonably possible. Requests should ordinarily be submitted to the Session, Personnel Committee, supervisor, or other body designated by the employing organization, with appropriate notification to the Presbytery when required. When the need for leave is unexpected, notification should be provided as soon as reasonably practicable. Reasonable documentation may be requested to establish eligibility for leave. Medical and personal information related to a leave request shall remain confidential.

XII. Ministry Coverage During Leave

PEVA recognizes that extended leave may require temporary arrangements for preaching, worship leadership, pastoral care, administration, congregational leadership, or other responsibilities. The Session or employing body, in consultation with the Presbytery when appropriate, is responsible for developing an adequate coverage plan.

The individual taking approved leave may participate in reasonable advance planning when circumstances permit; however, the individual taking leave shall not bear primary responsibility for locating, arranging, or personally financing their replacement or ministry coverage.

PEVA will work with congregations, particularly smaller congregations, to identify appropriate resources for pastoral coverage when assistance is needed.

XIII. Status and Return Following Leave

Upon completion of Paid Family and Medical Leave, the individual shall ordinarily return to the same position held before the leave, with the same compensation, benefits, and substantially equivalent responsibilities. When leave has been taken because of the individual's own serious health condition, reasonable documentation from a healthcare provider indicating readiness to return to work may be requested. When medically appropriate, the individual and employing body may develop a gradual or transitional return-to-work plan.

XIV. Relationship to Terms of Call and Annual Review

Consistent with G-2.0804, each Session shall annually review the minister's Terms of Call and propose appropriate changes for congregational action, provided that the Terms of Call continue to meet or exceed PEVA's minimum requirements. The provision of twelve weeks of Paid Family and Medical Leave shall be understood as a minimum component of the Terms of Call of each called and installed minister of the Word and Sacrament serving within PEVA. Nothing in this policy shall diminish a more generous provision already contained in an individual's Terms of Call, employment agreement, congregational personnel policy, or other applicable policy.

XV. Congregational Policies

PEVA encourages each congregation to maintain a written Paid Family and Medical Leave Policy consistent with:

- Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.);
- PEVA's minimum Terms of Call requirements;
- applicable Board of Pensions provisions; and
- applicable federal, state, and local law.

Congregations may adopt policies providing benefits greater than those established here. PEVA particularly encourages congregations to consider extending comparable leave protections to church employees who are not covered by the constitutional requirement of G-2.0804.

XVI. Administration and Periodic Review

This policy shall be administered by the appropriate PEVA committee or personnel body in consultation with the Executive Presbyter/Stated Clerk or other designated Presbytery staff. PEVA shall periodically review this policy to maintain consistency with the Book of Order, General Assembly actions, Board of Pensions benefits and policies, applicable employment law, and emerging best practices for family and medical leave. The PC(USA)'s current sample policy specifically advises mid councils and congregations to consider applicable federal, state, and local requirements and recommends review by an employment attorney familiar with the jurisdiction before adoption.

Nothing in this policy is intended to diminish a greater benefit or protection provided by an individual's Terms of Call, employment agreement, Board of Pensions participation, congregational policy, or applicable law.

- *Original Policy Adopted by the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia on July 28, 2009*
- *Edited Policy "Parental Leave Policy for Ministers of the Word and Sacrament, Commissioned Pastors, and Certified Christian Educators " Adopted by the Commission on Ministry on May 3, 2016*
- *This policy was adopted and replaced the previous policy on October 6, 2026*